

TOPIC 5: yourCHOICE

Tastes Great, Less Fat!

Skill-Based Outcomes

Preteens who participate in this activity will be able to:

- ❖ Use food labels to spot types of fats and foods with more or less fat.
- ❖ Tell someone why it is healthy to choose some fats less often or in smaller amounts.
- ❖ State simple ways they can eat lower fat foods more often.
- ❖ Make an easy, lowfat snack.

Empowerment Messages

- ❖ Fat provides both flavor and energy.
- ❖ Energy from fat is measured in calories; a gram is a weight that is used to measure the amount of fat in foods.
- ❖ Check the food label to compare the calories and the amounts and types of fats in foods.
- ❖ Choose foods more often that are low in saturated fat and cholesterol.

Activity Summary

(Icebreaker) **What's on Your Spud?** - Preteens brainstorm their favorite baked potato toppers as they start to become aware of fats in foods.

1 What Do Food Labels Say About Fat? - Preteens quickly review what they learned about food from the fat facts on food labels. They use this skill for the next activity.

2 "Scoop" Fat Facts - They scoop and measure fat in their food favorites and/or potato toppers to see that foods have different amounts of fat.

3 Check It Out: High or Low in Fat? - They practice using the "5-20" guide with *Nutrition Facts Cards* and food labels, as an easy way to spot foods with more or less fat.

4 (Afterschool Snack) Turn Up the "Salsa" With Sals-y Spuds! - Preteens make a Sals-y Spud (snack with a lowfat topping) to apply what they've learned. As volunteer preteens prepare the ingredients, others do some salsa dancing!

(Wrap up) **What's yourCHOICE?** - To put their "power of choice" in action, preteens come up with personal steps for eating high-fat foods less often or in smaller amounts.

Getting Ready

● Read:

- ❖ Do You Know...? on the next page

● Display Posters:

- ❖ *Read It Before You Eat it!*
- ❖ *Feed Me!*
- ❖ *Move It!*
- ❖ *FIGHT BAC!*

● Get:

For "What's on Your Spud?"

- ❖ One baked potato for demonstration
- ❖ Nine *Nutrition Facts Cards* (baked potato, butter, margarine, sour cream, bacon, gravy, cheddar cheese shreds, salsa, and chili)

For "What Do Food Labels Say About Fat?"

- ❖ One or more boxes of standard-size metal paper clips

For "'Scoop' Fat Facts"

- ❖ *Nutrition Facts Cards*
- ❖ Solid shortening, such as Crisco (2-pound can)
- ❖ Sets of measuring spoons, spatulas, knives, or rubber scrapers
- ❖ Clear plastic sandwich bags
- ❖ Markers

For "Check It Out: High or Low in Fat?"

- ❖ One or more sets of *Nutrition Facts Cards* (at least six cards per person)

For "Turn Up the 'Salsa' With Sals-y Spuds!" (snack activity)*

- ❖ *Ahead of time, bake potatoes in the oven or microwave oven.*

(Refrigerate and reheat, or keep at 145 °F.)

- ❖ Tape recorder and audiotape or CD player and CD with dancing music (perhaps salsa music)
- ❖ Ingredients: small baking potatoes** (one per participant), prepared salsa (2 tablespoons per participant), cheddar (or mozzarella) cheese (1 ounce per participant)
- ❖ Equipment: cutting board, small knife, grater, and bowls for salsa and cheese with spoons to serve
- ❖ Table setting: paper plates, forks, napkins

* If your program has been approved to serve USDA's Afterschool Snacks, the snack served as part of this activity may qualify for reimbursement. For each participant, **serve at least one small (6 ounces) baked potato and 1 ounce cheese.**

** As an alternative snack option to baked potatoes, offer **4 whole-wheat crackers.**

For "Wrapping Up: What's youCHOICE?"

- ❖ "yourCHOICE" handout*** for each participant
- ❖ (Optional) some form of recognition for each participant

*** Reminder: Collect handouts for next session.

Do You Know...?

With today's snack and fast-food choices, most preteens eat too many high-fat foods, perhaps more than they think. At the same time, foods with

less fat, especially fruits and vegetables, often come up short. Choose foods often that are low in saturated fat and cholesterol.

Why make food choices for less fat? After all, fat is a nutrient that provides both flavor and food energy (calories), and it helps the body use some vitamins. Yet...

- ❖ Many very high-fat foods provide few other nutrients. Very high-fat foods may crowd out other foods from the Food Guide Pyramid that supply nutrients preteens need as their bodies grow and develop.
- ❖ Over time, a lifelong eating pattern that's high in saturated fat, total fat, and cholesterol can lead to health problems, such as heart disease.
- ❖ In the short run, eating too much fat and too many high-calorie foods can result in being overweight.

Which foods have more fat; which have less?

Pay attention to types and amounts of fats...

- ❖ Many foods in the Pyramid tip, such as salad dressing, butter and margarine, gravy, and some candies, are high in fat.
- ❖ Many desserts and snacks (cookies, cake, thick shakes, fast-food "pies," nachos with cheese sauce) are made with high-fat ingredients.
- ❖ Frying adds fat to vegetables (French fries, potato chips, onion rings) and to chicken and fish, as well as to some grain products (doughnuts, funnel cakes).
- ❖ Use the food label to choose foods lower in saturated fat.
- ❖ Fruits, most vegetables, lowfat and fat-free foods made from milk, lean meat and poultry, fish, and many grain foods are low in fat. They fill you up more, too, without adding a lot of calories.
- ❖ Cooking in a microwave oven, a steamer, or on a grill doesn't add fat.
- ❖ Lowfat or fat-free foods, such as fat-free cookies, aren't necessarily low in calories. To find out, you will need to check the calories per serving on the Nutrition Facts label.

How can you choose foods to cut back on fat? Use the “5-20” guide as you check Nutrition Facts on food labels to find foods with less fat and to compare the fat content in food choices. To get less of a particular nutrient in your eating pattern (such as total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium), try to choose foods with a lower % Daily Value (DV). As a guide, foods with:

- ❖ 20% DV or more for a nutrient—that’s a lot
- ❖ 5% DV or less for a nutrient—that’s a little

How much is enough? That depends on a person’s energy needs. The DV on a food label is 65 grams for total fat; for saturated fat, it’s 20 grams. That’s based on a 2,000-calorie daily diet. For each individual, the % DVs for these fats may be higher or lower depending on your energy needs. Try to keep the amount of fat in your overall food choices to 100% DV or less per day.

How can you make choices about fats in foods without giving up foods you like? Counting fat grams or adding up % DVs isn’t appropriate for most people. You don’t have to cut out all high-fat foods. Instead, make changes one step at a time to eat less fat overall. Try these easy steps:

- ❖ Reduce the amount of food you eat. Eat smaller amounts of food favorites that have more fat.
- ❖ Choose moderate amounts of total fat and lower amounts of saturated fat.
- ❖ Substitute. Choose a similar food with less fat or no fat, such as fat-free salad dressing. Use Nutrition Facts on food labels to compare. Choose fats that come from plants instead of fats that come from animals.
- ❖ Find lower fat favorites. Check the food groups on the *Feed Me!* poster for foods with less fat, such as baked potato, skinless chicken, pretzels.
- ❖ Use lower fat ingredients: fat-free salad dressing, lean ham, frozen yogurt (in a shake).

yourCHOICE Tastes Great, Less Fat!

Topic 5 Activities

Getting Started: What's on Your Spud!

Focus interest on exploring fat in preteens' food choices by talking about the toppers they put on baked potatoes.

Start by putting a whole, plain baked potato on the table. (ASK:)

- ❖ Do you eat baked potatoes?
- ❖ What do you usually put on top? **As preteens name a topper, put a *Nutrition Facts Card* for the topper by the potato, for example:**
 - butter or margarine
 - sour cream
 - bacon
 - gravy
 - cheddar cheese shreds
 - salsa
 - vegetarian chili
- ❖ (ASK: Except for salsa and chili, what do the other potato toppers have in common? *(They are full of flavor and high in both calories and fat. Most are high in saturated fat.)*)

Challenge their thinking. Keep the discussion open-ended so preteens talk freely, and everyone gets a chance to share his or her thoughts.

- ❖ Suppose you want a topping for your baked potato that tastes great and has less fat. How will you make your decision?
- ❖ How can you cut down on fat? *(Use high-fat toppings less often or in smaller amounts.)*
- ❖ Why does less fat matter to you?
- ❖ Will it be important to anyone in your family?
- ❖ How about your friends? Why?
- ❖ Where can you find the amounts of the different fats in foods?

Activity 1: What Do Food Labels Say About Fat?

Using the *Read It Before You Eat It!* poster, quickly review what preteens already know about food labels—including fat facts—from Topic 4.

Have them pair up and pick any food from a set of the *Nutrition Facts Cards*. Encourage them to tell each other at least three facts the Nutrition Facts label tells them about their favorite foods. For example:

- ❖ serving size
- ❖ servings in the container
- ❖ calories in one serving
- ❖ total and saturated fat in one serving

Label Lingo for the Nutrients to “Get LESS”

- **Total Fat** – all the fat, including saturated fat in foods
- **Saturated Fat** – fat that is solid (not oil) at room temperature; mostly in fatty foods from animals
- **Cholesterol** – a fat-like substance but not a fat itself

Continue focusing on the fat content of food.

- ❖ **Discuss:**
 - How much is 1 gram? **Give a paper clip to each person.** A paper clip weighs about 1 gram.
 - Does that feel like a lot?
 - For the food you picked, how many fat grams does one serving have? How many paper clips is that?
- ❖ **Have preteens pick the food with the most fat per serving, then make a paper clip chain to show how much fat that food has.** (ASK:
 - How many grams are shown for saturated fat?
 - Why is it important to pay attention to the amount of fat in food?
 - Does it matter if the fat is from a plant or animal? (POINT OUT: Fat from animal sources tends to be more saturated.

Activity 2: “Scoop” Fat Facts

This hands-on activity helps preteens see the amount of fat in their everyday food choices, and it’s fun for preteens to do!

Start with a quick demonstration. Have them measure the fat in one serving of the food from a Nutrition Facts label.

- ❖ **POINT OUT:** 1 teaspoon of fat weighs 4 fat grams, the same as four paper clips. **ASK:** If you measure one serving of this food, how many teaspoons of fat will it have?

1 paper clip = 1 fat gram

4 fat grams in 1 serving of any food = **1 teaspoon fat** (shortening)

12 fat grams in 1 serving of any food = **3 teaspoons fat** (shortening)

Have preteens scoop and measure fat in different foods, perhaps their food favorites and/or potato toppers mentioned earlier. Here’s how:

- ❖ **Use the Nutrition Facts on the poster or *Nutrition Facts Cards* to find the fat grams in one serving.**
- ❖ **Measure shortening** into a plastic bag to see how much fat it has.
- ❖ **Identify the food:** Write the food name, serving size, and number of fat grams on the bag. Put the *Nutrition Facts Card* next to it.
- ❖ **Talk about the fat in all their foods.** For example:
 - Are you surprised by how much fat any of these foods has? Why?
 - How do they compare for total fat and types of fats? For calories and other nutrients?
 - What happens to fat and calories when the amount you eat gets bigger?
 - When you add fat to food—such as more gravy, salad dressing, or butter or margarine—what happens to calories? (*Calories go up*)
 - Why pay attention to the amounts and types of fats in food? Why will that information be important for someone in your family?

Activity 3: Check It Out: High or Low in Fat?

Now that they've "scooped and measured," preteens apply the "5-20" guide to food labeling as a practical, easy way to identify fat in their food favorites. Refer to Topic 4 for more about the "5-20" guide.

Have preteens sort *Nutrition Facts Cards* into three piles: foods they think have a little fat, foods they think have a lot of fat, and foods that fit somewhere in between.

Have them use the "5-20" guide to talk about the foods in each pile.

- ❖ Use the *Read It Before You Eat It!* poster to review the "5-20" guide to food labeling: for one serving, 5% Daily Value or less is low for fat, and 20% Daily Value or more is high for fat.
- ❖ Encourage them to practice using the "5-20" guide to see if they put all the *Nutrition Facts Cards* in the right pile. (POINT OUT: You can find this same information about fat on food labels for foods you buy in stores or from vending machines.
- ❖ (Optional) For more practice, have preteens find their food favorites from the *Nutrition Facts Cards* and determine types of fats and whether each fat is a high amount, low amount, or in between amount.

Have them explore how they can choose foods using the label. (ASK:

- ❖ Which foods are the best choices for you? Why or why not? How can you use the "5-20" guide to pick snacks for the types and amounts of fats?
- ❖ How can you use the food label to pick foods from each food group? Encourage them to use the *Feed Me!* poster and the *Nutrition Facts Cards*.
- ❖ How can you show your family how to use the "5-20" guide to pick foods with less fat? Why?
- ❖ Why is it smart to eat mostly foods lower in saturated fat? (POINT OUT: Many people eat more saturated fat than they need. Eating too much fat isn't good for you. To help stay healthy, choose lower fat foods often.
- ❖ Are foods with a little fat always low in calories? Use *Nutrition Facts Cards* for cookies and fat-free cookies, and compare. (POINT OUT: "Low fat" and "fat free" don't necessarily mean "low calorie;" you need to read food labels to find out.

Activity 4: Turn Up the “Salsa” With Sals-y Spuds!

Turn on dancing music, perhaps “salsa” music. While some dance, others get snack ingredients ready for easy-to-make super Sals-y Spuds.

Have fun with salsa dancing! Encourage preteens to show some new dance steps to others. Using the *Move It!* poster, talk about dancing as a fun way to move more and sit less.

Prepare Sals-y Spuds:*

- ❖ **Give preteens a chance to wash their hands before handling foods.** Talk about this food safety tip. Refer to the messages on the *FIGHT BAC!* poster.

Food Safety-Smarts: Consider using paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces. If you prefer cloth towels, machine wash them often in hot water.

- ❖ **While preteens are dancing, have volunteers help get the snack ingredients ready:** Reheat baked potatoes; shake salsa, shred cheddar cheese, and serve each in bowls with spoons; set paper plates, forks, and napkins on the table.

Have everyone put together their own super Sals-y Spud by topping their spud with salsa and cheddar cheese.

As they eat, have preteens use *Nutrition Facts Cards* and the *Feed Me!* poster to talk about their “stuffed spud.” (ASK:)

- ❖ Why is this Sals-y Spud a healthful snack choice?
- ❖ How much saturated fat will the potato have if you use other toppings, such as gravy or regular sour cream?
- ❖ How can you enjoy a higher fat food, such as cheese, yet still get less fat from your food choices?
- ❖ How will you make this snack at home? Why? (POINT OUT: Chopped veggies taste great on baked potatoes! (ASK: Which ones will you try?
- ❖ How will the amount of fat compare with different toppings? Encourage preteens to use *Nutrition Facts Cards* to decide.

* *Optional activity variation:* Offer different kinds of toppings with less fat (vegetables, such as corn or onions, salsa) and more fat (cheese, sour cream, gravy). Give preteens a chance to pick toppings and decide on amounts to avoid overdoing on fat in their “stuffed-spud” snack. *Nutrition Facts Cards* provide information about the types and amounts of fats.

Wrapping Up: What's yourCHOICE?

Wrap up by making “yourCHOICE” action plans for making food choices with less fat.

Review what they learned about this topic by having preteens sum up the messages about eating foods with less fat. **ASK:**

- ❖ What foods do you eat that have a lot of fat?
- ❖ What's the reason for trying to cut back on fat in your overall food choices?
- ❖ How can you do that? **Talk about the goals and actions** they can take to cut back on fat in their overall food choices. *(For example, GOAL: Pick lower fat foods when I eat out. Actions: Order pizza with lower fat toppings. Get a small order of fries not the big one.)*

On their “yourCHOICE” handout, have each person write a goal and three steps he or she can take this week to make food choices for each day with less fat. (Note: At the next session, ask them what actions they actually took.)

Have the participants see how they did with the goal and action steps each person wrote on their own “yourCHOICE” handout for the last topic. They can check (✓) the steps they took so far. (Optional) Each person who took at least one action receives some form of recognition.

Collect their handouts to use in upcoming sessions.